

## **Stardust Curation Survey Results**

Thank you for your attention to the recently released survey of Stardust sample PIs. If you have planned to respond, but have not yet done so it is never too late! The survey results are very illuminating and have revealed some problems with the allocation process (which was of course the reason behind the survey). Two things that the survey have made clear is that the community needs better communication between sample requestors and the Curator, and that many persons are not completely familiar with the allocation process itself. To correct the first problem, the Curator will now (1) explicitly inform an applicant when a sample request has been received by the Curator, and (2) will provide a more immediate report of the Stardust Allocation Committee's decisions regarding each sample request. The Allocation Committee will also inform each sample requestor independently when the sample request is being considered, so that the request consideration process will be more transparent. Please feel free to inquire about the state of any sample request, rather than just wonder what is happening!

The successful sample request team should also understand that once a sample request is approved, the Curator can not generally indicate when the samples will be processed, nor promise to meet a deadline for sample receipt. Once approved, allocations are generally made in the order in which they have been received, and the backlog of sample allocations is currently several months. One should never schedule instrument time and expect the Stardust samples to appear on schedule. When we identify problems with sample allocations we will halt the allocation process, in the interest of solving the problem and safeguarding the value of the samples. For example, we are currently redesigning the sample containers for keystones, as we have had several reports of lost keystones in the past year. The new container design should decrease the opportunities for keystones dropping off of forks, and increase the probability of finding those that do.

It is also clear that some sample investigators are not aware that the Stardust samples are loans only, except in special circumstances that must be indicated in the original sample request. All allocated samples will be recalled after a generous period of time has transpired (generally 1 year), to permit samples to be shared. Failure to respond to a sample recall will result in a delay in allocation of other Stardust or other controlled astromaterial samples.